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DIARY

By CARLTON S. DENNY

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THE DIARY

By **CARLETON E. DENNY**

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A story of

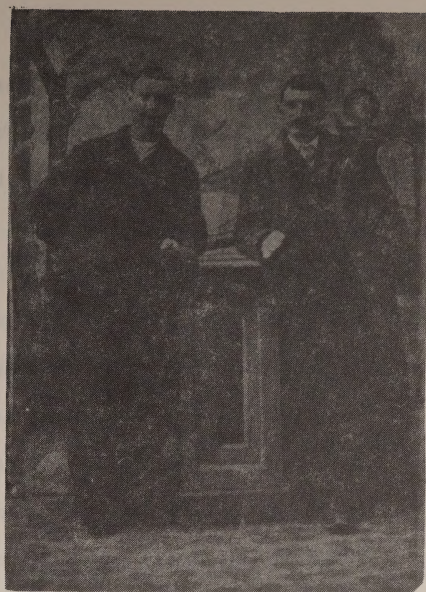
Edgar A. Denny

a young man of the 1880's who fell in love
with Pike County, Arkansas

Based on a diary, old letters, and incidents
as told to his son, the author.



Edgar May Onan
 Josie Onan's Friend
 Bert Lovina Cass



Edgar Henry

South Haven Sentinel on December 11, 1889
 printed the following item:

Seymour-Denny

News of special interest to residents of Glenn, Ganges and Casco was the wedding of May Seymour to Edgar A. Denny. The ceremony was held in the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lothrop C. Seymour, December 10th, with the Rev Robert Eisenburg of the United Brethren Church officiating. The groom is the son of Mrs. Minerva Denny Scott of Ganges.

Miss Julia Tourtellotte attended the bride as Maid of Honor. The groom's brother, Milo Denny was Best Man.

The couple will reside in west Casco, where the groom is a well known carpenter.

The state of Michigan was formerly part of The North West Territory. The French had founded Detroit as a trading post in 1617 and had sent missionaries to the interior in 1648. As a result of the French and Indian War, Canada and the Territory were ceded to Great Britain. In 1805, the United States Congress made Michigan a territory with a measure of self government.

The census of 1830 lists Twelve counties with a total population of 27,378. A "Travelers' Guide and Immigrants' Directory" published in 1836 showed that the new state had 36 counties with a population of 36,743. Barrien County had 315 people, Van Buren had 5, Allegan 56, and Cass could boast of 919. Cassopolis had been selected as the seat of justice for that district. The guide made many favorable comments about the level land and rich soil. It stated that most of the state was covered by heavy forests of oak, ash, sugar maple, poplar, and walnut, with a great abundance of pine. Farms produced wheat, rye, oats, buckwheat, hemp and potatoes. There were many orchards that produced fruit of all kinds.

The directory was correct in every respect but the publishers could not have foreseen that a strip of land ten miles wide and one hundred miles long would be developed into one of the most productive fruit growing regions of the nation. This land is near Lake Michigan and includes parts of Barrien, Van Buren, Allegan, and

Ottawa Counties. It became known as The Fruit Belt.

In the late 1800's and early 1900's it was served by three railroads and numerous small steamboats. The steamers would load the fruit at the community piers and deliver it to the Chicago markets within 12 hours. There were also three good harbors that would accommodate larger boats.

It was to the vicinity of Cassopolis that Cyrus Hamilton brought his bride in 1836. He became quite successful as a miller and a farmer. Most of his farm was an old lake bed that milleniums of erosion and vegetation had filled in resulting in a level tract of very rich soil that was almost the equivalent of the peat bogs of Ireland. Southern Michigan has thousands of these former lake beds which are very desirable as farms and truck patches.

The Hamiltons raised two boys and a girl. In 1844 the girl, Minerva, was born. When she was 16 she married Alfred Denney. Very little is known of Alfred except that he was a hard-working hard-drinking Irishman who farmed one of the small lake beds. He could neither read nor write but Minerva taught him to write his name and to read a little. The only link with his past seems to be an empty envelope postmarked in pen and ink "Abington, Wash. Co., Va." Minerva noted the spelling of the name but taught him to write it as "Denny" to make it a little easier.

On June 27, 1861 Edgar Adam Denny was born. Minerva's favorite uncle Alfred Poe lived nearby. He was a cousin to Edgar Adam Poe who was orphaned at an early age. He was adopted by Henry Allen and became known as Edgar Allen. Later, as an author, he used the name Edgar Allen Poe. After Minerva's boy learned to read and write he used the middle name of Allen, hoping that the apparent connection with the famous author would be noticed.

Other children of Alfred and Minerva were:

James, who acquired a farm in Porter County, Indiana and spent all but the first eleven years of his life there;

Henry, who early in life developed a love for the out-of-doors, became a market fisherman on Larto and Catahoula lakes in Louisiana;

Lovina, who married Bert Thorpe and lived in St. Louis for many years;

Cass, who drove a hack in Holland, Michigan for 20 years then moved with his wife and two of their four children to Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada;

and Milo, who lived for a time in the Cherokee Nation before joining the Santa Fe' Railroad from which he retired, and spent his later years in San Diego, California.

Alfred raised enough potatoes, squash, beans, and corn to feed his rapidly growing family. He acquired some farming tools, a wagon and a pair of morgan horses. Farmers of those days did not depend on a "cash crop", instead, they hoped to be able to trade some of the produce at a local store for flour, salt, clothing, and other necessities. If Alfred had stayed away from the liquor jug his family might have had a fairly comfortable life. Instead, his judgement was poor, his physical condition deteriorated and his family suffered because of it. He would borrow money from a merchant in town and fail to pay it back; often some kind of farm produce would be demanded in payment. Things got so bad that a creditor threatened to seize the horses. A trade was made wherein the debt was paid and Alfred became the not-so-proud owner of a team of donkeys. Fifty years later Minerva was heard to exclaim "I can see him now, coming up the road driving that little pair of jinnies!"

Things got progressively worse for the Dennys. On the brighter side Ed and Jim had reached the age that they could be of some help on the farm, such as taking care of the cow and chickens, and picking berries. Either boy could use a hoe with good results.

Alfred had taken a winter job of cutting logs for a local sawmill. Damp lake winds and snow combined to produce weather that only the physically fit could endure. After about a month of exposure Alfred succumbed to pneumonia and died within the week. Then Minerva was reminded that the mortgage on the farm would be foreclosed and that she would have to give up her home by April first.

Minerva's Uncle Alf had moved to Kouts, Indiana. She wrote a letter to him telling of the plight they were in. By late March Uncle Alf had made arrangements for the two older boys to work at a farm and cheese factory near Boone Grove, Indiana. He sent them money to pay the stage fare to Valparaiso. They accepted the offer and within a few days arrived at the Merrifield farm. Mr. and Mrs. Merrifield were very kind and took the boys into their home along with another boy named Porter (W.P) Childers. They were each expected to do a man's work which included milking forty cows twice a day. The cows required lots of feeding and other attention, especially in winter. During the growing season the boys worked with the other farm hands raising corn, oats, barley, and hay.

One hot July morning Mr. Merrifield said, "Ed, that heifer that lost her calf did not come up with the rest. Go find her and milk her so that her bag won't spoil". Ed took a short rope and went to look for her. Three hours later he had not returned, so Mr. Merrifield sent Jim to find them. He found Ed and the cow belly deep in the creek. Ed was holding the

head and tail with one hand and milking with the other.

April 16, 1874, Dear Edgar and Jim, I hope this letter finds you both in good health. Uncle Alf wrote that the Merrifields are good people and that they will take good care of you. I hope that you will be good boys and work hard so that you will be worth your keep.

Mr. Mackintosh says that we can stay on the farm until June or until he finds a buyer for it. I wrote to Noble Scott, your cousin Jessie's stepfather, hoping that he could find a place for us there in Barrien County. They raise lots of fruit there and maybe I and the older children can pick strawberries and raspberries and earn a little money. I sold the jinnies and bought a pretty good old horse. If I can find a light wagon we could make the trip in a couple of days.

Now you boys be good and write to me, Mother.

Boone Grove, Indiana, Sunday, April 30,

Dear Mother, Your letter found us well and I hope you are the same. Jim and Porter have gone fishing but I stayed at the house to write to you and to look at the books here. Mr. Merrifield has all kinds of books about trees, plants, rocks, animals and everything. We don't have to work on Sunday except to milk the cows and it is time to do that now. Jim and Porter just came in with 2 catfish. I hope Mrs Merrifield cooks them for supper. That would be a lot better than the johnny cake and milk that we usually have on Sunday night. During the week we sometimes have beef stew. Mr. Merrifield gave us 25c yesterday, so we went to the store

last night. Your Son, Edgar Allen Denny.

Benton Harbor, Mich., May 10, 1874.

Dear Aunt Minerva, Your letter received and contents noted. We were shocked and saddened to hear of Uncle Alfred's passing. Mr. Scott sends his condolences and says that you would be very welcome at our house. -If you can get here by the last week in June there will be lots of work for you and the little ones until October or later. I do hope you will come; it has been very lonely here since mother passed away. I should not say this but I think that Mr. Scott is already looking for a second wife.

Mr. Scott says that you must come by way of St. Joseph, cross the bridge into Benton Harbor and take the Lake Shore Road north about 4 miles to our store. We will be there and the house is not far away.

Hoping to see you in June, I remain,

Your Loving Niece, Jessie Hamilton.

Upon receiving the letter from Jessie, Minerva began to make plans to go to Barrien County. She bought a light wagon for six dollars and had a blacksmith make some repairs on it. He refused to take pay for his work or for some work on the harness. A neighbor gave her a wagon sheet and cut down the bows to fit the small rig. That left some surplus canvas that could be extended to the side to make a shelter for those who would sleep on the ground.

Minerva had been doing washing and ironing for some time, and now that she was in greater need, neighbors brought

in as much work as she could do. The sale of cow and chickens brought in a few dollars.

On the twentieth of June, after loading the wagon with bedding, clothes and a few other belongings the Denny's started west. It had been difficult to say goodbye to friends and neighbors, but everyone assumed that they would be together again in October.

The road was sandy but not very hilly and the weather was perfect for this kind of traveling. At sundown they pulled up under a grove of maples by the side of the road. They tied down the lean-to, made beds on the ground and in the wagon, and lay down for the night. Everything seemed to be going as planned, except that Milo, after seeing his mother put salt on the eggs being cooked for breakfast, tried to help, but he used sand instead of salt.

The second day the road was more interesting to the children. There were other travelers and a better road. They were told that they could probably finish their trip before sundown. Near mid-afternoon as they approached a railroad they saw a train for the first time. The horse saw it too and was not too pleased with the sight but he was too tired to do anything about it. Soon they were in the town of St. Joseph which reminded them of Cassopolis. While crossing the bridge they could see another train on their right and on the left was a lake steamer in the harbor. Benton Harbor had several fine stores and hotels along the main street. Many new buildings were under construction. Teams of oxen were

everywhere, hauling loads of lumber or logs. Some of the teams were of 2, 4, or 6 oxen. There was one 8-wheeled wagon being pulled by a 4-yoke team.

There were lots of horse-drawn vehicles hurrying about. These were used to convey people and their baggage to or from boat or train. Some were transporting supplies to the mercantile establishments.

The children got a little restless after the excitement of the city had been left behind, but were buoyed up by being reminded that their long trip would soon be over. They arrived at the Scott store long before sundown and were greeted by Jessie and her step-sister, Emma Scott. The young ladies showed them the way to a small house that they had prepared for them.

The next few days were spent in making the house livable. The horse and wagon were sold and the money used to buy a cook-stove and other household necessities.

The following week, strawberry pickers were in great demand. Everybody worked except Milo who stayed with Jessie and Emma while the others were in the field. The strawberry harvest lasted for ten days, followed by raspberries, blackberries, currants, and plums in rapid succession. Then came early apples, pears, and peaches, all of which had to be picked, graded, and packed. By the time the apples were taken care of it was late October and all thoughts the Denny s might have had of returning to Cass County were forgotten.

Spring arrived in due time and the fruit farmers entered another season of plow, pick, and pack. For the Dennys it was the same routine for three more years. News from Edgar and Jim had been good. Mr. Merrifield had been paying the boys in addition to their "keep", and they had been saving a little. Edgar had indicated that he would like to go to Benton Harbor so that he could go to school during the winter. School was out of the question with cows to be taken care of every day of the year. Minerva thought it was a good idea if -, but let her tell it in her own words.

April 10, 1878, Dear Edgar and Jim,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and doing a good job. We, especially the young ones, are a little excited right now. Mr. Scott has asked me to marry him and I think I will. I will have to give him an answer soon. He has bought a farm in Ganges Township in Allegan County, including all stock and equipment. He wants to move up there right away and get started with the planting. He says the house is large enough for all of us and that you boys can come right on and help him. I think it will be the right thing for me to do, then you young ones can have a father and a home that would be better than I have been able to provide. I will probably tell him yes tomorrow. Emma and Jessie will have full ownership of the store. It is mostly Jessie's anyway. To get to the farm you take the Pere Marquette R.R. and get off at Fennville and go west about five miles.

I hope to see you boys in the near future.-Love, Mother.

The new family wasted no time in moving to their home in Ganges. The house was situated in the midst of about five acres of peach trees in full bloom. The rest of the farm was more adapted to the raising of wheat, oats, and corn. Mr. Scott immediately began preparing a field for oats. The previous owner had planted about ten acres of wheat in the fall and it was now a vigorous shade of green. There was a family-sized garden spot near the house, and Minerva, with the help of all the young ones soon had it producing food and greens for the table.

By the end of summer it was very evident that Minerva had, indeed, used good judgement in marrying Noble Scott. The peach trees had produced in abundance, the wheat crop was great, and there would be enough hay and oats to feed the oxen, the cows and the buggy horse. But there was one disappointment, Edgar and Jim had not come to live with the family. However, they came in early September expecting to enroll in school with the other four. Within a few days they developed a dislike for their step-father. Jim went back to the Merrifields and Ed went to live with Seth and Maggie Hamlin, a retired elderly couple, in an agreement to work and go to school. There was not much work to be done. There was a team of buggy horses, a cow, two steers, and a few fruit trees to care for. To Ed it seemed like the fulfillment of a dream. The school was only a mile away at a cross-roads community called Glenn. It was a 2-room school where history, grammar, geography, and Latin were taught.

Edgar considered it to be a great privilege to study grammar, history, bookkeeping, and geography. School athletics were not exactly unheard of but all such activities took place before or after school hours. Track meets were not formally scheduled but were the result of challenges to run fifty or one hundred yards or to jump with weights. In the jumping contests the competitor held a dumb-bell or large stone in each hand and as he jumped he would throw the weights behind him thus getting an extra thrust. Sometimes a jump of ten feet would be made. Sometimes there would be wrestling matches or even fist fights. Edgar excelled in most events. He was only five feet eight inches tall and weighed one hundred fifty pounds, but the years of hard work had given him the physique of a mature man.

His running ability was well demonstrated on a Saturday afternoon in November. Mr. Hamlin had sold the steers on condition that he would deliver them to Douglas, a distance of six miles. The animals were two years old and had never been led by a rope. Ed and a seventeen year old friend coaxed them into the barn with some feed, tied a rope to each pair of horns and shouted for Seth to open the gate. In a matter of seconds they were out on the open road with the wind in their faces. Each of the boys was holding a rope in one hand and a tail in the other. There was no question about who or what was leading but the tails made good rudders. Those six miles might have been the first four-minute-miles.

The years 1878 to 1883 were prosperous ones but uneventful for the Denny-Scott family. Jim stayed at the Merrifields. Henry, always an outdoor boy, discovering that trapping for muskrats and mink was a lot more fun than parsing a verb, made sure that school did not interfere with running his trap lines. Besides the fun involved, a good hide was worth from twenty five cents to a dollar. The result was a modest bank account.

When Cass was 12 he began working at a livery barn in Douglas. He slept in the office six nights a week but managed to be at home quite often. Home was where fried chicken was on the table every Sunday and Edgar would be present. Week days Ed stayed at the Hamlin's or worked with Alvie Tracy as a carpenter's helper. Mr Tracy encouraged him to become a full time carpenter. At twenty one he had a full set of tools and two hundred dollars in the bank.

During a lull in work time in late fall of 1883 Edgar went by train to Chicago to see a big city for the first time. The train was derailed just outside of the city. There were a few injuries but most of the passengers, after a short delay, were able to complete the trip. Edgar was unhurt but the incident was the beginning of a strange series of events. Two passengers who were injured sued the Pere Marquette Railroad.

Three months later Ed received a summons to appear As a witness in Federal Court in St.Louis.

When court convened all witnesses were told that the case had been postponed for a period of thirty days. Faced with the decision to go home or to stay and see the city, Edgar remembered seeing a poster in the depot stating that the Iron Mountain Southern Railroad was selling round trip tickets to Texarkana for five dollars. The offer was too good to ignore. Next morning he was aboard the Iron Mountain rattling and banging over a track that followed closely the old South-West Trail, the same path traveled by countless emigrants to Arkansas, Texas, and the West.

It was a beautiful and exciting trip. The mountains of south-east Missouri and north-east Arkansas, and two great rivers, the Black and the White, provided exceptional scenery. The train made a rest stop for supper at Newport, then proceeded to Little Rock. At daybreak the next morning they arrived at Smithton which was a division point for the railroad. Edgar decided that he had had enough of "that smokey jerky train". He picked up his carpet bag and stepped out into the sunrise of a spring day. What a difference! Two days ago there was wind and snow; today daffodils and wild flowers were everywhere. He wanted to see more of it. He noticed a branch of the railroad leading to the west. While eating his breakfast at the hotel the proprietor explained that the branch was built to Oklonona for a logging road and that passengers were accepted. There was one train each work day but it had already left. That was no problem for Edgar, he simply walked down the tracks.

He was impressed by the sight of mile after mile of tall pine timber. Some tracts had been cut and hauled to Smithton but a vast amount was still standing. He arrived at Okolona in time to have taken the train back but a good bed and a hot meal seemed more attractive. Other lodgers at the hotel provided conversation regarding the territory further west where all the timber was still waiting for the saw. There were a few communities where farmers had cut and burned so that they could raise crops but other than that it was all what was referred to as virgin timber. The next morning a local resident pointed out a road and said that it went to Murfreesboro, the county seat of Pike County. He said there were two communities on the way; Antoine, about ten miles, and Wolf Creek about 17 miles. Again Edgar started on a walk to nowhere, seeing more luxurious forest. The lowlands near the Antoine river were covered with red oak, white oak, and red gum with a scattering of pine. The town of Antoine was on the old South-West Trail. From Little Rock to Washington, Arkansas the road was called the Military Road. During the Civil War Washington had been the state capital.

Edgar ate dinner at the hotel, gathered more information about the country in general and decided to go to the next settlement. Most of the next five miles was along a wide creek bed. Then he came to a creek crossing, a large cleared area, several farms, two churches, and a cemetery. About a quarter of a mile past the second church a man and a woman were working in a garden. They said that their name

was Threlkeld, and that they did not see many strangers. They asked him to come in and "set a spell" which he was glad to do.

He had covered fifteen of the seventeen miles, thus a chair and gourd of water was a welcome change. They talked about the weather, corn planting time, and the quality of the well water. The Threlkeld's seemed not to notice the carpet bag. Edgar's interest was in the pine woods, and when they told him that he was looking at 200 acres that could be bought for six hundred dollars he could scarcely believe it. They also told him that a Mr. Craig, who lived a mile down the road that led into the tract, could tell him more about it.

Edgar did not have six hundred dollars but it was an intriguing idea, therefor, after a few thank-yous and other amenities, he was again walking in his favorite surroundings. It was the prettiest timber he had seen since being in Arkansas. The land was gently rolling with no swamps nor gullies.

Mr. Craig had just come in from the field and welcomed the stranger, and introduced his wife Margaret and four of their children; they were Clinton, Robert, Samuel, and Cornelia, all in their teens. Edgar told the circumstances of his being on call from the court in St. Louis and that he would like to find lodging close by so that he could see more of Pike County. He liked what he had seen so far and had given up all thought of Texarkana. Mr. Craig replied that he could use a good hand to help him and the boys in clearing

some new-ground. The Craigs would provide bed and board in exchange for work. Edgar accepted the offer and spent the next several days swinging axe and mattocks. The work was hard, the bed was in the corn-crib, but the food was good and plentiful.

During conversation with Mr. Craig, Edgar learned that the land in question belonged to a man named Mobley who had previously lived in the county and owned several parcels of timber. He had sold most of it and had moved to Texarkana. The address could be found at the court house in Murfreesboro. So Edgar took a day off from work and took to the road again, going by way of Wolf Creek Post Office and Brock Springs. Being in no hurry he spent most of the day there stopping at Wolf Creek on the way back to mail a letter to Mobley and giving his Michigan address, hoping that the delay would give him a chance to try to finance the \$600.00.

Back at the Craigs he spent the few minutes between supper and dark each day prowling the woods and enjoying every minute of it. Mr. Craig, however, would light a little brass lamp and read his bible for about thirty minutes, then he would blow out the lamp; that meant that it was time for everyone to go to bed. Sometimes if the weather was cool Edgar would put a pine knot on the fire and by the light of it read from a little botany book that he had brought with him.

One evening it suddenly occurred to him that he had not written to his mother since leaving Michigan. That introduced another idea: why not write to his brother Henry

and persuade him to help buy the land? About a week later Henry received a letter as follows:

Wolf Creek, Ark. April 10, 1884,

Dear Hen, When I got to St. Louis I found that the trial had been postponed so I took a train for Texarkana. I got tired of riding so I got off at Smithton early in the morning and after a good breakfast of biscuits, ham and eggs, I started walking down a railroad that was used for logging a sawmill. They call it the Southwest Arkansas and Indian Territory Railroad. I saw 15 miles of high grade pine and oak timber. About noon I came to the end of the line at a town called Okolona and had dinner at the hotel. The proprietor said that if I wanted to see some real nice country with big timber I should go further west into Pike County. Well, I had walked far enough for that day so I put up for the night and the next morning took a wagon road that the natives told me would lead to Antoine and Wolf Creek Post Office. Besides the timber I saw lots of game and game tracks. Squirrels were everywhere, mostly grays but some fox. There were two herds of deer, and along the Antoine River I saw otter sign. I am working for my keep with a family named Craig and using my spare time just prowling around the country. I am coming back here next winter and if you will come with me we could build us a shack and be comfortable all winter away from the snow and cold winds. The hunting and fishing is much better than in Michigan. Mr Craig says that the 'coons got a big share of his corn crop. Some of this land is selling for

\$3.00 an acre. When I get home I will try to get Len, Sherm, and Westcott interested in coming down here. Everybody should like this country. See you soon. Ed.

The main connection with the outside world for the people of Wolf Creek and Stellville communities was the St. Louis Post-Dispatch which came by mail twice a week. MR. Sam Wall, the Postmaster, was a subscriber and always left the current copy where anyone who came in could read it. Edgar would read every word of it when he had the opportunity. One day there was a public notice to the effect that the personal injury claim against the Pere Marquette Railroad had been settled out of court. It further stated that if the witnesses would come to the Federal Building they would be paid mileage even though they did not actually appear in court. This was really pleasant news to Edgar and he lost no time in getting started back north. He knew that with the coming of spring there would be plenty of work for a carpenter. He walked to Okolona and rode the log train to Smithton. In two more days he was back with his family and friends.

He had plenty to talk about for a long time. According to him, Arkansas was a Mecca that everyone should visit at least once. Corn grew to ten feet high with two ears on every stalk. Farmers raised a bale of cotton to the acre and all the peaches and apples that the family could use. All livestock grazed on the free range and hogs got fat on

acorns. A big item was the plentiful wild game of all kinds. A person could camp out the year around and live off the fat of the land. The winters were mild and short, and it rarely snowed. The subject of possible long hot summers was not mentioned; Edgar had not spent a summer in Arkansas,- only a few days of spring.

Farmers in the fruit belt had experienced four years of good yields and fair prices. Carpenters throughout the area were busy making home improvements. This included Alvie Tracy, Edgar, Onan Westcott, and even Henry who was not the world's best carpenter but he could drive nails and saw a straight line. He preferred to hunt and fish but during the off season for furs he received good wages. When the letter from Mr. Mobley confirmed the terms of the land sale he was ready to accept Edgar's plan to "go halvers" with him.

They went immediately to the First State Bank in South Haven and gave the cashier authority to close the deal. Several weeks later a deed arrived giving them ownership of two hundred acres of the west half of section 25-8S-24W. Edgar was the proudest man in the whole neighborhood. By the time summer was over and the lake winds were getting seriously cold, he and three others had made plans to go south for the winter, or at least a part of it. There was "Ony" Westcott, Henry, and a blacksmith named Sherman Walkeley. "Sherm" considered himself a great 'coon hunter with two dogs and a dislike for labor of any kind. His father

could take care of the shop as he did most of the time anyway. The four planned to build a shack and live the "life of Riley". They filled two trunks with a small tent, horse blankets, clothing , a few carpenter tools, axes, guns, a frying pan, and a some other essentials. The dogs were put in crates provided with food and water dishes. On the Monday before Thanksgiving the four and all their accoutrements boarded the train at Pullman for Pike County, Arkansas, by way of Chicago, St. Louis, Little Rock, Smithton, and Okolona.

At Okolona they bought a tiny cook-stove, a slab of bacon, coffee, meal, flour, and other supplies. They hired a man with a team and wagon to take them the rest of the way. The dogs were let out of the crates and allowed to run at will. They showed no interest in possible wildlife along the way but seemed to enjoy swimming in the creeks and branches. The men felt like they had been let out of cages, and walked most of the way.

Arriving at the campsite in late afternoon they had plenty of time to set up the tent and have a supper of corn bread and bacon before dark. Cooking was done over an open fire in a Dutch oven which is an iron skillet with a rimmed lid that can be covered with hot coals. The water supply was the Craig well which was a short distance away. Sleeping space might have been a problem in the tent but Mr. Craig suggested that they use the corn crib, and Edgar and Henry spent the next few nights there, until the shack was built.

On Thanksgiving day they cleared an area for the shanty

On Thanksgiving Day they cleared an area for the shanty and used some of the small white oaks for the foundation. On Friday they borrowed Mr. Craig's team and wagon, went to a sawmill about four miles away and bought a load of lumber for seven dollars. They finished the building just in time to have a warm and dry place before a heavy rain fell. They had bought an empty whiskey barrel at Antoine and placed it under the eaves. Now they had water to take baths and a stove to heat it on. Late November can bring some low temperatures to Arkansas. They were quite comfortable in their new home, but Edgar was having trouble trying to read his geology and botony books by candle light. Sherm said that the best remedy for that was to quit trying to read the books at night. He then brought out a deck of cards and with the help of Ony and Henry, introduced Ed to the games of pitch and penochle. It took a couple of nights to teach him how to play but they could not teach him to like it.

Henry had been providing the table with squirrel stew but when the rain stopped, serious hunting began. No deer sign had been seen near the camp but residents had assured them that there was plenty of game in the hills north of Wolf Creek. The area near the main road was more thickly populated than the campers had supposed. They had not been listening when Ed had reminded them that Arkansas had become a state a year earlier than Michigan, with about the same number of people. Arkansas was only beginning to recover from the blight of the Civil War.

On the first clear day Westcott and Walkeley took the dogs and struck out toward the north west, while Edgar and Henry followed a branch of the creek to the north east. There was a predominance of hardwood in the valley but the hills were shaded by a canopy of pine with very little underbrush. It would have been possible to see a deer at a distance of two hundred yards. About three hours of walking brought them to another creek that showed promise as a hunting ground. Henry shot a small buck and after they had removed the head and other inedible parts they started back to camp. The antlers were not trophy size but they would be used as evidence of the first hunt. They took turns carrying the meat, with it draped across their shoulders like a knapsack. They took a different route home, following the creek bed for some distance and arriving at the shack in time to have venison for supper.

Sherm and Ony came back with their hunting coats full of squirrels which they dressed and gave to the Craigs. Sherm had shot what he thought was a wild turkey but it did not look just right and had a bad odor so they did not bring it in. They had not seen a buzzard before. They reported seeing lots of raccoon tracks and what they assumed to be opossum tracks but the dogs did not tree anything. There was plenty of deer sign but no deer.

The next night Sherm and Ony went out looking for coon, but the dogs just did not have their hearts in it. They treed about four times but Sherm was disappointed in the hunt. The

following night they tried again, going out on the military road to the south and west with similar results. Henry, who was doing the cooking, could make a 'coon taste pretty good, but when he tried a 'possum and sweet potatoes they even threw out the potatoes. Next, he tried a crow, which was not a great success, and then a pileated woodpecker which was worse than the crow but not as bad as the possum. Venison was always available but everyone likes variety.

Before coming to Arkansas, Edgar had read that the early Spanish explorers had reported that the territory held deposits of gold, silver, and lead. That information suggested all manner of possibilities for the hills and valleys of Pike County. Every outcropping of rock and every gravel bar invited Ed's inspection.

Henry was a little disappointed that he had not found a good place to fish, neither had he found any sign of muskrat or beaver. He preferred running a trot line or a trap line to trudging over the rocky hills in search of deer. The nearest thing to a beaver was found on a trip along the Antoine River. He and Ed were on a high cliff near but not within sight of the water. Ed stopped, cupped a hand behind an ear and said "I hear a beaver". They heard a 'whap! whap! whap! that continued for several seconds, then after a pause, repeated. Henry said "That's no beaver and anyway they do not work in the daytime, but let's see what it is." So they crept carefully up to the edge of the cliff and saw at the water's edge a woman washing clothes.

She would take a garment, swish it around in the water, lay it on a flat rock, rub soap into it, then whip it with a thin narrow board. The men retreated the same way that they had arrived[very quietly. They learned later that the lady was "battling clothes with a paling". One wonders what the husband would have done had he surprised the men peering over the cliff. They did not wait to find out but hurried back to the shack to recount the experience of the day. Sherm added it to the list of items that he would use in later years to tell the loafers around the blacksmith shop all about Arkansas. Later additions to the list were hogs that slept under the house and cows that bedded down in the front yard. It was apparent in his stories that he never became reconciled to the fact that his dogs did not hunt well in the new environment.

An item in the Arkansas Gazette related that a steamboat had arrived at Arkadelphia to pickup a load of cotton for New Orleans. This was not a scheduled trip but was dependent on river conditions. The Ouachita was navigable about four months of the year. The Gazette also stated that the Henry Marquand would return on the 6th of January, river conditions permitting.

This piece of news generated a lot of talk among the men at camp. Ony wanted to get on the next boat and go to New Orleans. Henry said that he might start but would rather get off about half way there and do a little duck hunting. Sherm

said he thought they were both 'teched in the head', and that he was as far south as he wanted to be. Ed had no fixed opinion either way but preferred to use the camp as a headquarters and make side trips such as to Hot Springs or Washington. Anyway, there were still lots of rocks in Pike County that he would like to examine.

They finally agreed that Ony and Henry would go to Baton Rouge and Sherm and Ed would return to Michigan, although Ed was not near ready to go back to a cold winter.

A few days later they arranged for their trunks and dogs to be taken to Arkadelphia where they boarded train and boat; the train arrived and left that afternoon, but the boat required another day to finish loading. There were two passengers who were market fishermen from the lower Ouachita. Their headquarters was a place called Larto from which a boat from Baton Rouge picked up the fish twice a week. Henry convinced Ony that they should get off the boat near there and shoot a few ducks, and perhaps fish a little.

This decision proved to be the beginning of a whole new way of life for Henry. Ony got his fill of cane brakes, alligators, catfish steaks, and roast duck in a very short time, but Henry decided to stay and try his hand at market fishing. In a letter dated March 3, 1885, Henry described the situation in this manner:

Dear Mother and all the Kids, I hope Westcott made it back to Michigan in good shape. I think he and Sherm had about all the hunting and fishing that they could stand for a

while but don't believe everything Sherm tells you about Arkansas. I liked it there but Louisiana is a lot better place for hunting and fishing. I think Ony got enough to last him for quite a spell but I plan to stay here until the mosquitoes run me out. I am making a good living with a few trot lines catching lots of 5 to 10 pound catfish which a buyer from Baton Rouge picks up twice a week. There is another boat that buys ducks once a week. We go out the day before the boat comes and if it happens to be rainy and cold, sometimes I get 30 or forty. I have to dress the ducks and try to keep them cool, but we keep the fish alive until the boat gets here. I guess Ony told you about me killing a bear while he was here. The hide now makes me a good soft bed. I am living on a houseboat and I keep it tied out in the middle of the lake. That way the mosquitoes have a hard time finding me. The weather is warm here nearly all the time and they are pretty bad around where people live. This place is not very far from the mouth of the Ouachita, and not very far from the Red River. If you want to write to me send it to Larto Lake by way of Blachawk Post Office. - Henry.

Social activities of the community of Ganges consisted of ice cream socials, meetings of the debating teams, and for the young people, going to church on Sunday night and sitting in the lawn swing on the front porch afterwards, in couples, of course. There were also ice cream suppers where various flavors were sold for five cents a dish, the money going to

the church or other organization involved. The ultimate form of recreation was buggy riding, but of course that mode of travel was not available to every young person. Farmers generally had horses and a buggy, but usually the sons would rather walk than drive a plow horse hitched to a buggy even though the horse was of the breed known as a Morgan. This was the type of animal that is sometimes credited with winning the west, being of medium size, spirited, and worked well in the field, to a buggy, or under the saddle. The usual rig was pulled by a bay or a black weighing not over nine hundred pounds and having plenty of spirit and stamina. They were often required to travel forty miles in a day.

Having reached the age of twenty-four, Edgar realized that there are certain things that have to be faced. The buying of the land and the trip south had totally depleted his small bank account and he was in no mood to think about buying anything else; but spring was at hand and soon he was working for Tracy again, driving nails and swinging an adze. He was living at home for the first time since he was twelve years old. Lovina had married Bert Thorpe and lived in Fenneville. Cass was working in Holland. Only Milo and Ed were at home with their mother and stepfather.

On a dusty night in June of that year a small incident convinced Ed that a horse was not an absolute necessity for his well being. He had walked his girl home from church and

had gone only a short distance when he heard a rig approaching from the rear. In the moonlight he could see that it was a social rival driving a fast stepping horse. Seeing a golden opportunity to throw dust on a lowly pedestrian, the driver whipped the horse into a run, but Ed had anticipated the move and was running far ahead. The horse stumbled and fell, throwing the man into the dirt and breaking the shafts of the buggy.

Fortunately neither horse nor driver was hurt seriously but there is always pride and ego to be considered. The event provided the basis for a lot of good conversation in the barbershop and for Sherm and others in the blacksmith shop. Ed basked in the publicity for a time, but realized that he needed a horse and buggy to move his tools from job to job. On the negative side was the fact that for the same price he could have bought 40 acres of timberland in Arkansas. On the positive side was the usefulness of the rig on Saturday nights and Sundays. Ice cream suppers took on a whole new meaning and there was a wider range of communities and friends.

Among these new friends was May Seymour whose parents were Lothrop and Eleanor Seymour. They owned a 100 acre farm with a beautiful residence, a fine barn, ten acres of peach trees, and a small apple orchard. May's brother Clarence owned an adjoining farm, and C.A.Seymour, an uncle lived a half mile away.

Edgar joined the "Grange" which was primarily a farm organization but included cultural and social programs. The group met each Saturday afternoon for reports on the latest farm practices, debates and the reading of essays.

Beginning on January first 1891 and continuing for one year, Edgar made daily entries in a diary. Some of these entries are being quoted and left to stand, others have been woven into a narrative that may help to acquaint the reader with the life and times of a young man trying to lift himself by his own boot-straps. Others will be ignored as being repetitious or unessential to the story. Some will be used to point the way to others. All in all it was an eventful year.

Thur. Jan. 1 - "May and I and her father and mother partake of a good New Year's Dinner at C.A. Seymour's. All such bids promptly attended to. I balance my books and the balance comes out on the wrong side so far as cash is concerned. Ed."

Fri. 2. - "Buy 6 bu. of rye @ .55 per bu. and pay cash for same. Take it to mill and change it for ground oats and rye for pig feed, also buy 100 ft. of lumber to repair pigpen .70 Thermometer 16 above, tonight, ground covered with snow.

"Sat. 3 - "Put a floor in my pigs bedroom and give them a bed of straw and feed them well. I hope to get something from them after a while. Attend Grange in afternoon where I am again elected treasurer."

Sun. 4 - "Stay at home and help take care of the baby. Read and sleep. a very pleasant day. Would like to see 2 months like just like it."

Mon.5-"I take my book under my arm and tramp through the country 16 or 18 miles, but did not get an order. I received a few promises and may be able to get an order later. I have too much of something else to attend to, to give my whole attention to the book business."

He was trying to sell the 'Encyclopedia Britannica'; he will mention it again at various times.

Tue.6-"Load up a grist of wheat and go to Douglas mill for Father. Also talk a little book but get no orders as money is scarce. A great many people complain about hard times, yet there is plenty to eat. Cold and clear."

The year of 1890 was a near disaster for fruit growers; an early spring with a hard freeze in April eliminated the peaches and damaged a high percentage of the trees. The apple crop was not affected, and with the coming of spring Ed and the other carpenters found plenty of work.

Wed.7-"I go to Glenn in the forenoon and in the evening I go to South Haven and attend the installation of officers of the I.O.O.F where we are all treated to an oyster supper. Pay my dues a month in advance. Get home all straight about 12."

Thur.8-"Write a letter to the Chase folks who are in California. Help Father cut some wood. I think I would rather cut wood than to be a book agent. My pigs are eating too much to be profitable. We are all good natured and well. Cold and hazy. Ed."

The Chases were neighbors who were visiting in California. They returned about three weeks later and spent many happy hours telling their neighbors about their experiences.

If Ed liked to cut wood he should have been very happy: during the next seven weeks he and his father-in-law cut and hauled to the house twenty six loads of wood on wagon or sleigh.

Fri.9-"Make wagon bolster for John McCarty and receive cash .50 for same, then Father and I go to woods and cut and split a cord of wood in about an hour and a half. In the evening I go to PO and get my tax receipt from Arkansas. Indication of snow. Good Night. Ed."

Sometime during 1887 Edgar had written to Henry offering him a twenty five dollar dollar profit for his half of the Arkansas land, but the letter was returned, marked "moved, no forwarding address". Not knowing any alternative Ed inquired of the Post-Master at Blackhawk, who replied by Post Card dated 12/24/90- Dear Sir: Your letter making inquiries of one Henry Denny rc'vd. In reply will say there was such a party receiving mail from this Post Office. He was fishing up on Red Pines. Have not seen or heard of him for some time. You might try Tooley's Post Office which is about 30 miles from here. Yours Truly E.F.Pipes, P.M.

Acting on this suggestion Ed posted a letter to Henry on the 28th. On February 2nd Ed made the following entry in his diary. "Today is Woodchucks Day as we used to call it, and if

he came out at noon he could have seen his shadow. Father and I put up 3-1/2 cords of wood in 6 hours. How's that for boys? Received a letter from Henry. He accepts my offer".

It may be unbelievable that the exchange of letters could have taken place in so short a time, but the dates and entries are evidence that it did happen. It can be assumed that Henry posted his reply by return mail. On the Michigan end the Post Office was served by horse and buggy each day on a 22 mile route. The rest of the deal did not go that well. Ed sent a money order on the 4th to make a down payment on land but a reply was slow in coming.

Edgar was never idle for long. During February he cut more wood, started to build a bookcase, took part in a debate at a Grange meeting, and butchered his five hogs. He delivered the pork to Saugatuck, a distance of twelve miles and received five cents a pound.

Sat.Feb28-"I finish reading the history of Africa. It is a rather short, condensed history of that great continent. Receive a letter from the South Haven P.M. in regard to the money order sent to Henry which has not been presented for payment. I hope he will present it soon so that I can go there and get the papers made out and the deed recorded."

Sun.Mar.1-"Another month has gone and I haven't accomplished a great deal, but then, I guess I am as contented as most people. This morning the mercury was 2 below zero. We did not go to church but the sun came out and warmed things up. May and I just got back from a visit to the

neighbors.

Mon.2-"Study a little in my old grammar which I never did understand. Began writing an essay to read at the Grange. Go to the P.O. twice. Read all the papers including 2 from Redlands Cal. Repaired a door lock for Mrs. Bostic. Help women hang out clothes. Do chores."

Barn chores in that cold climate was a major event every day. All stock was kept in pens or stalls and had to be fed, watered, and bedded. Stalls had to be cleaned twice a day, and floors re-covered with straw each evening. Every family owned horses, cows, pigs, and chickens. Mid-winter days were about eight hours long. If Ed sawed wood for eight hours that meant doing chores by light of a coal oil lantern.

Mon.9-"Take job of building a barn for Tom Sanders,- size 26/36/16 for the sum of \$60.00. Help Father haul a load of wood. We broke the reach out of the sleigh. I am requested to gather up some statistics to be used in debate at Glenn. Write to Mother. Send papers to Henry."

He had heard from Henry and began making plans to go to Louisiana to complete the sale. His mother was visiting at Jessie Hamilton's in Chicago. When she returned she brought some things for May and the baby.

Sun.22-"Attend church at Glenn with our mother and hear a temperence sermon. In the evening I gather a few twigs with buds of apple, cherry, peach, and willow. Put them in a glass of water in a warm place and expect to have some blooms soon. I heard the first spring peepers (frogs) today.

Thur.26- "Make a rustic plant stand for May. Go to Nick Paquin's and pay him \$8.55 for 2136 lbs of hay we got on Monday. Strong, cold NE wind all day, now at 6.00 PM it is beginning to sleet. Supper call. Lora is proud of her 2 new teeth."

Sat.28- "We trim trees in forenoon. Chilly work even if we have all our old clothes on. Afternoon go to Grange. I read my little essay. I presume it was a poor excuse for an essay. If I had stayed at home I would have had a job making a wagon axle. Mr Sanders says he is about ready to start the barn."

Sat.29-"Easter. We attend services at U.B. Church at 10.30 . Have Eggs for dinner. I was able to take care of my share as usual."

On the eighth of April he moved his tools to the Sanders place and started marking the timbers for the barn using a scratch awl and a square. All the frame except the rafters had to be morticed together. On the twenty second everything was ready and most of the neighbors came in for the barn-raising. Ed records in his diary "It took about 25 or 30 men and it went up nicely. I done the talking and the other fellows done most of the lifting. We pinned the bents together before noon and raised it in about 1-1/2 hours in afternoon. Everything fit fine."

He finished the barn on May the fifth and took Mr. Sander's note for \$55.00 with no interest for four months. Ed had received \$5.00 as a down payment.

Thur. May 6-"Am out of corn and corn is .75 & .80 per bushel. Buy 2 bushels from Father but he refused to take pay, says he will let me work for it. We hitch Bell with father's horses and begin plowing sod. When Father plows I hoe strawberries and currents. Tonight I read in Railway Age of a RR being built in the direction of my place in Ark. OK!

Fri. 8-"We go to South Haven to get the baby's picture made. She was as good as could be. Sent one P to Henry and Christina. Draw some money from the bank to pay Mr. Culver for helping on Sanders barn. Get vols. 6, 7 & 8 of Britannica for Mrs. Cheniworth. Get balance of my commission on books."

Sun. 10-"A very pleasant day. Went to church. Later my better half and I take a stroll to Lake Michigan, through the woods. It is about a mile. We wandered around and picked flowers until we were tired. Also picked up pebbles and petrified shells on the beach. The more I see of the vegetable kingdom the more I want to study it. Letter from Mr. Craig says that my place and shanty are all right."

On Tuesday Edgar and May went by horse and buggy to visit his sister Lovina and husband Bert Thorpe. It was an eight hour trip on a sandy and hilly road. While eating their lunch Ed shot a four-foot-long blue racer. They visited with the Thorpes the next day and then did some shopping in Allegan, the county seat. Ed bought a botany textbook, of which he was very proud. After spending the night with May's relatives in Allegan they returned home by a better road.

The horse traveled the twenty four miles in about five hours.

Fri.29-"Help plant 1/4 acre of potatoes. Found 2-foot rule that I lost about a year ago. Found a nice arrowhead. Father hires a man to help on the farm. I will be building a house for Mr. Sweet soon."

Most of the next two months was spent in building a house at Cheshire, a community about fourteen miles distant. Ed and Mr.Tracy boarded with the Sweet family during the week and would go home on Saturday nights. They worked from six A.M. to six P.M. for \$2.00. They took a day off to celebrate Independence Day, another to attend Ringling's circus at Allegan, and another to attend a meeting of the Grange. On Mondays they would get up at four A.M. so as to be at work on time. They finished the house in late July, three weeks before the peach harvest began. Ed used the time to prepare the ground and and sow eleven acres of wheat. After that, he and three friends enjoyed an overnight fishing trip on the Kalamazoo river.

Sun.Aug.16-"Read and rest to my heart's content. Black cherries are still hanging on the trees and I had a good feast on them. Have been looking over some old coins and noticed that I have one dated 1836. Wife and baby OK."

By September 10 the peach harvest was in full swing. On the second day of picking, the Seymour farm sent two hundred baskets to market. A basket held about one fifth of a bushel and was the most popular type of container.

Mon.14-"Work in peaches all day. We take 146 to pier. I hear that there were 12,000 baskets received at Glenn Pier last night. May put handles on 100 baskets today. Sleepy."

Wed.16-"Work hard in peaches all day. Get off the equal of 185 baskets."

Thur.24-"Work in peaches all day and take a load of 247 baskets to pier in evening. No time to rest or read. May handles baskets until late at night."

Sun.27-"Stay at home -well- no, not home but here I am and have been for some time. In fact it is not home and I cannot make it appear that way but I rested anyhow."

Thur.Oct.1-"The month of September has gone and with it the most of the peach business for this year. We worked a total of 21 days and shipped almost 600 bushel. Haven't received a cent from that source. We pack a few peaches in morning and take them to So.Haven. The lake was too rough for the boat to tie up at the pier. Mr.Mc.Dowell wants me to build a sugar house for him this fall. Have a 10 day job waiting at Cheshire."

High north-west winds were quite common on the lake shore, especially in early fall. The resulting six to eight foot waves prevented the small boat from tying up and loading at the pier. South Haven had a good harbor and service of larger boats. Produce could be on the market in Chicago at the regular time but it required an eight mile trip by wagon.

Sun.4-"Walk to Church at Glenn. Read the newspapers and sleep. At supper was very much surprised when I turned my

plate over to find \$25.00 in cash, and my wife found the same amount. Thanks to Father. Raining."

Mon.5-"Drive 14 miles to Cheshire early in morning, nearly chilled through before I got there. Tracy was already there. Showery."

Wed.28-"Finished the Cheshire job today, got our cash and came home. Tomorrow I will start the sugar house. Fire in the woods."

Fri.30-"I feel as if I had been to an Irish wake. We fought fire till 3:30 this morning, and the wind was blowing a gale. We kept it off the rail fences but it is still burning in the woods. Work at Mc.Dowell's. Sleepy."

The sugar house was 18 by 30 feet with a side shed in which fire wood was stored. Sap from maple trees was heated and evaporated to syrup or sugar or both. Elsewhere in the diary Ed tells of attending a "sugar party" and coming home with a belly ache.

Tue.Nov.24- "Finish the sugar house and I am very glad of it. Too cold for that kind of work. 14 days, \$28.00, \$20.00 in cash and bal. to be applied on keeping my horse at \$1.25 per week while I am gone to Louisiana."

Wed.25-"Make money belt of deerskin. In morning walk 5 miles doing errands. Bought some oysters in Glenn. After dinner walked to So.Haven and back, 16 miles, caught a ride part way. I prefer to walk in this cold weather. Drew \$275.00 from bank. May is getting ready as fast as she can. Ony says that he will go with us."

Mon.30-"Get up at 4 boarded train at about 8. Changed to Pere Marquette RR at Hartford. At Chicago, wife, baby, Westcott and myself went to Cousin Jessie's and spent the night."

Tue.Dec.1-Stay all day in Chicago visiting with Jessie. Boarded 9 o'clock train for St.Louis."

Wed.2-"Arrived at St.L. this morning. 2 hours later boarded the Iron Mountain. Ride all day and are beginning to get tired. Baby restless."

Thu.3- "Arrived at Little Rock at about 2AM and went to a hotel for a little sleep. We picked a miserable place to stay but managed to get a little sleep and rest. Later in the day, found a good place for May to stay."

Fri.4- "Westcott and I boarded train for Arkansas City and arrived that place in late PM. This evening we shot 2 squirrels and both got a shot at a deer."

Sat.5-"Can't get away from Arkansas City until tomorrow. Went out squirrel hunting. Westcott killed 4 and I, 6 and sold them for 10c apiece. Warm weather and I feel good. Wish I was down at Henry's."

Sun.6-"At Arkansas City, that miserable hole; stayed all day. Anything fit to eat is very high. About 4 PM we got ferried across the river and proceeded south."

Mon.7-"Arrived at Natchez at 5 AM and found that we were there for all day as the steamer for Blackhawk would not leave until tomorrow. Went out to look for game but found none. Wrote to wife."

Tue.8-"Boarded the "Stella Wilson" at 2 PM and arrived here about 8 but could find no place to stay so put up for the night with a colored family."

Wed.9-"Slept good last night. After the darkies gave us a bite to eat we walked to Red River, 4 miles. Found a fellow who knew Henry who lent us a boat and we started up river 28 miles. Did not make good time and spent the night on the river bank by a fire. Did not sleep.Tired."

Thur.10-"Started very early upstream and it was a very hard pull. Arrived at Henry's place just about dinner time. He had been very sick but was better. A hard looking place but a good place to hunt and fish. In evening I killed 5 squirrels."

Fri.11-"Walk to Tooley's Post Office, 10 miles but struck the wrong road on the way back and made round trip about 28 miles. No mail but got wet. Weather warm. All well."

Sat.12-"To office again, got letter from May, all well. Eat persimmons and gather a few specimens of wood. Henry and Ony cut a bee tree, we ate honey and I had a bellyache."

They spent the following week hunting and fishing and accounted for an alligator, a deer, 3 ducks, 12 squirrels, and fifty pounds of catfish. The weather was good and mosquitoes were not too bad.

Sat.19-"Henry, Wife Christina, and I went in skiff to Blackhawk, 28 miles by river and 4 miles afoot. Westcott decided to stay a while and fish. Put up for the night with colored people. Everything fine."

Sun.20-"got up late, had breakfast, and went to landing and waited for boat about four hours. It finally came and we arrived at Natchez at 11 PM. Tired and sleepy. Messed with the colored people on the lower deck on the way."

Mon.21-"On train. During the day Henry, Tina, and I had deed made out and acknowledged, giving me title to the 200 acres in Pike County, Arkansas. I paid him the bal. in cash, and we all said goodbye. Will be in Leland in the morning."

Wed.23-"Arrived in Little Rock last night at 6:30. Wife and baby well and glad to see me. Stay in hotel most of the day. Raining but I saw a little of the city. Would like to go to my place in Pike County soon."

Thur.24-"A very pleasant day. Wife and baby and I call on Charley Tracey's people and had a good visit. Charley and I visited the Stave and Heading Mill, the Oil Mill and the stock yards. The natives are in their glory now in anticipation of the coming Christmas. My trunk has not come from Natchez."

Fri.25-"A Merry Christmas to all from Little Rock, Ark. The firecrackers are booming all over the city, and all are celebrating. We have roast goose for dinner. Take 3:30 train for Arkadelphia."

Sat.26-"We wake up late at the Spencer House. Hire a man with team to take us to Pike County, about 33 miles. Arrived at the Craig's allright and they gave us supper and a bed. It was a long ride over a rough road."

Mon.28-"At Mr.Craig's, a kind friend whom I got acquainted with when we bought our place here. He lends me a horse, I ride to the county seat and get deed recorded. The horse stands the trip better than I do. Walk some and got back early. Look over my land some more and am better satisfied than ever. All have the best of appetites and plenty to eat."

Wed.30-"Good bye old Pike County. A very pleasant day. Mr.Craig took us to Okolona where we stayed all night. Mr.Craig is a very generous and good old man. He would not take any pay for our bed and board. Gather some petrified shells while at Okolona."

Thur.31-"Leave Okolona at 8 AM, change to Iron Mountain at 10, arrive at L.R. at 2 PM. Now on the Cannon Ball, and getting sleepy. Will be in St.Louis in the morning,home Sat."

Notes for 1892

"The year has gone and so is most of my cash, but there is some consolation in the fact that I am not in debt. We have had generally a good time and few things to regret. It is good to be home again even if there is a big blizzard going on. Sleepy. Good Night. E.A.D."

It would be gratifying to record that this was the beginning of a timber empire. That did not occur. Edgar acquired 240 acres of land adjoining the original purchase and always practiced selective cutting on all of it. One hundred years later his family is continuing the practice.

Edgar's philosophy is well expressed in Bryant's "Thanatopsis

To him who in love of nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
An eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware.

-

On the 30th of August 1835, in the last few moments
of Edgar's life, when asked if he needed anything,
he turned himself on his left side and said "No,
all I want is plenty of sleep."

-

So live that when thy summons comes to join
That innumerable caravan, that moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed
By that unfaltering trust; approach thy grave
As one who wraps the draperies of his couch
About him and lies down to pleasant dreams.

-Thanatopsis-

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